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NEWS RELEASE

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First DUI Victim's Tree Update **Holiday Weekend Fatality Free but 12 Injured in DUI Crashes**

Dover – Delaware Office of Highway Safety (OHS) officials were relieved that no one lost their lives in traffic crashes this holiday weekend. Still, 12 people were injured as a result of crashes involving alcohol. This means that 12 green light bulbs will be added to the DUI Victim's Trees, located in each of the DMV facilities statewide. These will be the first colored bulbs placed on the trees since the start of the Safe Family Holiday Campaign last week.

The DUI Victim's Tree project memorializes alcohol-related deaths and injuries which occur during the campaign period by placing colored light bulbs on the tree to represent each victim. Each red bulb on the tree symbolizes someone killed in an alcohol-related crash in Delaware between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve. Each green light bulb symbolizes someone injured in an impaired driving crash. Last year, two people were killed and 88 injured in alcohol-related crashes in Delaware during the holiday season.

This week OHS is distributing tags with a "don't drink and drive" message on them to local Christmas tree farmers and tree stand operators. Additionally, the office is partnering with State Farm Insurance Agent Jeanine O'Donnell to host a Mocktail Party at Mr. Go Glass off of Route 1 south in Lewes on Wednesday December 3rd from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., and with the at Christiana Care Trauma Program to host one at the Hospital on December 4th from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Mocktails are non-alcoholic cocktail parties which showcase how to host a responsible holiday gathering. Examples of non-alcoholic punches and high protein foods are served and OHS staff will be on hand to distribute information on the legal, social and financial consequences of impaired driving.

Thirty six percent (36%) of Delaware traffic deaths since January 1st have been alcohol-related. This is an 11% decrease in impaired driving related deaths compared to this time last year. Three sobriety checkpoints (1 in NcCo and 2 in Kent County, as well as 51 DUI saturation patrols are scheduled to occur this weekend. You can prevent alcohol-related crashes by being a HERO – Be a Designated Driver, or make sure you appoint one before you go out for the evening if you plan to drink alcohol.

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